

# Last work on Del. 1 nears end

Final section to be connected to highway by Memorial Day

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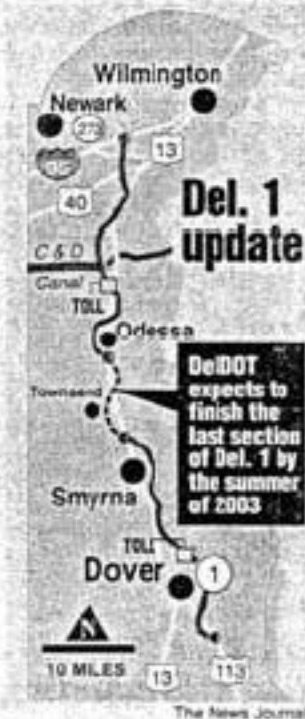
Del. 1's final stage should be ready for motorists just in time for summer beach traffic.

Weather permitting, the final leg of the state's biggest and most expensive construction project should be completed by Memorial Day for less than its estimated \$61.7 million cost, Transportation Secretary Nathan Hayward III said. The only major work remaining on the project is finishing sections connecting it to the existing highway. From start to finish, Del. 1 cost the state about \$1.3 billion.

After the expressway opens, traffic will snarl at times during final work on the tie-ins north of Smyrna and south of Odessa, DelDOT spokesman Michael Williams said. That work should be completed by midsummer, he said.

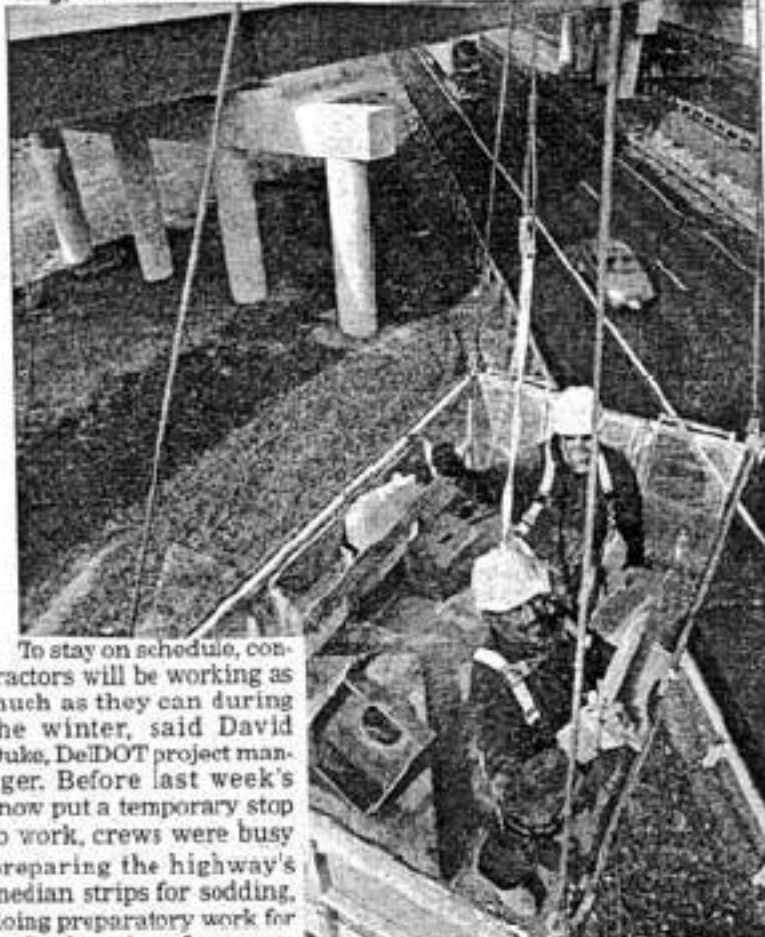
Along with the connectors, crews will work on sections of U.S. 13 that were realigned to accommodate the project. That work should be done by mid-September, but what the vast majority of motorists will notice are the hassles that go with finishing the connectors.

"It's probably the trickiest part of the whole project, mainly because this is the last section to be opened," Williams said. "There will be some periods where we have a lane closed, and that will create headaches."



The News Journal/FRED COMEY'S  
Crews on the new leg of Del. 1 were working on the last 500 yards of paving Wednesday before a snow break.

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Elder Brooks (front) and Mike Foxwell work on a Del. 1 bridge on Wednesday. Brooks, who had worked on the project since its beginning, was called back from retirement to help with the last phase.



To stay on schedule, contractors will be working as much as they can during the winter, said David Duke, DelDOT project manager. Before last week's snow put a temporary stop to work, crews were busy preparing the highway's median strips for sodding, doing preparatory work for its final section of concrete to be poured and other finishing touches. Among the latter was drainage work that found Elder Brooks of Chesapeake Beach, Md., in a basket at an overpass above U.S. 13 installing drainpipes.

Brooks, a 35-year construction worker, has worked on the Del. 1 project since its start.

"I've been doing this job for 25 years and retired once, but they called me back to see if I could help with this last part," Brooks said. "I've enjoyed it, but I'll be glad when this is over because I'm planning on retiring again so I can spend some more time with my family."

When the project is done, motorists will be able to drive on an expressway from Interstate 95 in the north to Del. 9 just below Dover Air Force Base in the south. Work on the final 7.7-mile stretch of the superhighway between Odessa and Smyrna started in 2001.

While there will be automated toll stations at interchanges, Hayward said there will be no new toll plazas along the final stretch of the road. And Williams said there will be no toll increases once the work is done.

Del. 1 was originally de-

Del. 1 was designed to allow summertime beach travelers to avoid bottlenecks, but it has also become a major commuter highway.

signed to allow summertime beach travelers to maneuver around bottlenecks in New Castle and Kent counties, but it has become a major commuter highway as well.

The road has spawned new development within easy driving distance of its on- and off-ramps, Hayward said.

Traffic at the Biddles Corner toll plaza has increased steadily since it opened three years ago without a corresponding increase at its two Dover toll plazas, he said.

"It's doing about what we thought it would do," Hayward said. "Most of [the year-round traffic] is coming up from southern New Castle County and Kent County heading to I-95 and Wilmington."

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